

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

TRSE-00 /062 W

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R 311011Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2778

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

DOD WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 24494

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJECT: ISOC BUDGET SHELVED BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

REFERENCE: BANGKOK 23494

SUMMARY: THE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ISOC), WHICH HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATING THAILAND'S COUNTER-INSURGENCY PROGRAM, HAS COME UNDER CRITICISM IN PARLIAMENT OVER ITS LARGE BUDGETS AND STAFF. ISOC DEPUTY COMMANDER GEN. SAIYUT KERDPHOL'S CONFIDENCE THAT ISOC'S BUDGET WOULD NOT BE TAMPERED WITH BECAUSE NO ONE WOULD WANT TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAMPERING THAILAND'S CI OPERATIONS MAY BE MISPLACED. ISOC'S BUDGET WAS SHELVED BY A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE AUG 30 PENDING A DECISION FROM THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (NSC) WHICH IS STUDYING A REVISED CI PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

1. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, GEN SAIYUT KERDPHOL EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE ISOC BUDGET OF BAHT 704,640,000 (1 BAHT EQUAL TO \$.05) ) WAS NOT IN SERIOUS TROUBLE DESPITE CRITICISM IN THE PRESS AND FROM THE HOUSE BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE. HE ADMITTED QUESTIONING FROM THE COMMITTEE HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT THIS  
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YEAR BUT ATTRIBUTED MOST OF THE PROBLEM TO IGNORANCE ON

THE PART OF THE MEMBERS, WHO HE SAID HAD NOT TAKEN THE TIME TO READ HIS EXPLANATORY AND JUSTIFICATION PAPERS AND WHO CONSEQUENTLY HAD LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF ISOC'S OPERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.

2. SAIYUT ADMITTED THAT THE ISOC BUDGET WAS "OVERSIZED" WHICH MADE IT A "LIGHTENING ROD" FOR CRITICISM OF ISOC AND HIMSELF BUT CHARGED THAT HIS EFFORTS TO REORGANIZE, STREAMLINE AND THEREBY INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ISOC HAD MET WITH NO RESPONSE FROM GOVERNMENT. HE THOUGHT THAT THE NSC WAS WORKING ON A TOTAL REORGANIZATION OF RTG'S CI EFFORTS BUT WAS NOT SANGUINE THAT ANY SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS WOULD BE FORTHCOMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

3. DESPITE CRITICISM OF ISOC AND ITS BLOATED BUDGET, SAIYUT FELT SURE THAT NO ONE IN THE RTG WOULD BE WILLING TO TAKE ON THE ONUS OF CUTTING ISOC'S BUDGET AND THEREBY HAMPERING THE GOVERNMENT'S CI CAPABILITY. ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF ISOC'S BUDGET IS EARMARKED FOR SUPPORT OF 54,557 CIVILIAN, POLICE AND MILITARY PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN CI OPERATIONS. ACCORDING TO SAIYUT, SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INCLUDING THE PM RECOGNIZED THAT IF FUNDS NOT ADMINISTERED BY ISOC WERE TO BE ALLOCATED INSTEAD TO THE INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES CONCERNED, THOSE FUNDS MOST LIKELY WOULD BE USED FOR OTHER THAN CI ACTIVITIES.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SAIYUT CORRECTLY CLAIMS THAT HE DOES NOT CONTROL THE CIVILIAN, POLICE AND MILITARY UNITS OPERATING UNDER ISOC (THEY REMAIN UNDER THE CONTROL OF THEIR PARENT AGENCIES). HE IS IDENTIFIED WITH THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS BUDGET AND AFTER TEN YEARS UNDER HIS DIRECTION ISOC HAS DEVELOPED A MYRIAD OF CI PLANS WHICH ARE STILL ONGOING AND ABSORBING SIGNIFICANT FUNDING WITHOUT PRODUCING VERY IMPRESSIVE RESULTS. IN ANY CASE, HE MAY HAVE UNDERESTIMATED THE GROWING IMPATIENCE WITH ISOC'S HIGH COST BECAUSE THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED THAT ISOC'S BUDGET HAD BEEN SHELVED FOR THE TIME BEING. THIS ACTION, HE SAID DID NOT MEAN THAT ISOC HAS TO BE DISSOLVED BUT THAT THE COMMITTEE WISHED TO WAIT FOR A DECISION FROM THE NSC, CONFIDENTIAL

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WHICH IS STUDYING A REVISED CI PROJECT.

5. ISOC MAY OR MAY NOT SURVIVE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. (DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE BUDGET BUREAU BODI FEELS THE BUDGET SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S ACTION REPRESENTS MORE A WARNING TO ISOC THAN A SERIOUS THREAT TO ITS EXISTENCE (REFTEL). THERE UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE MUCH BUREAUCRATIC INFIGHTING BEFORE THE ISSUE IS RESOLVED. BUT THAILAND'S

MODEST ACTIVITY IN COMBATING ITS INSURGENCY IS LESS AN  
ORGANIZATIONAL THAN AN ATTITUDINAL MATTER. EVEN IF  
SAIYUT SHOULD BE REMOVED AND OR ISCO REVAMPED, A CONCERN  
OVER AND A WILL TO TACKLE THAILAND'S INSURGENTS MUST  
EXIST BEFORE EVEN THE MOST EFFICIENT AND BEST LED  
ORGANIZATION CAN BE EFFECTIVE.  
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## Message Attributes

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